

California **GARDEN**

JULY—AUGUST 1973

50 cents



sketch by Alice Clark

FLORAL EVENTS

- July 15 Convair Garden Club presents their Annual Dahlia Show in the Majorca room of Casa del Prado. Free admission; 1 to 6 P M.
- July 22 San Diego County Dahlia Society stages their Annual dahlia specimen show in the Majorca room of Casa del Prado. Free admission; 1 P M to 5 P M.
- July 28 & 29 The A. D. Robinson Branch of the American Begonia Society will present a two day show in Casa del Prado. See back cover of this issue.
- August 4 & 5 The San Diego County Dahlia Society will present its Annual Dahlia Show in the Majorca room, Casa del Prado. Saturday, 2-6 P M; Sunday, 10 A M-6 PM.
- August 25 & 26 San Diego Rose Society will hold Open House in Casa del Prado. Saturday, 11 A M; Sunday, 11 A M-6 P M.
- August 26 San Diego Floral Association will have its annual Tea Party in the Floral Office at Casa del Prado. 2-5 P M.
- August 24-31 San Diego, "America's Finest City Week":
Rooms 102 & 103 Exhibits by San Diego Flower Arranger's Guild & Ikebana International.
Rooms 101 & 104 Exhibits by Affiliates of San Diego Floral Association and S. D. Botanical Garden Foundation.
Daily 10 A M-4 P M

TOURS

- August NO TOUR !
- September 15 Let's go to the Los Angeles County Fair in Pomona. This will be the second day of the fair and the excellent flower show will be at its peak. \$8.50 fee will include gate entrance. Balboa Park 8:30 A M; La Jolla departure 9 A M.

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CALIFORNIA GARDEN

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COVER AND CONTENT

The begonia drawing which graces the cover of this issue is particularly timely for three reasons: (1) It helps to set the theme for this issue, which is "Shade Plants". (2) It pairs with the back cover to publicize San Diego's forthcoming begonia show. and (3) Most fitting of all, it honors Alice Clark, of La Jolla, the artist who drew it. Alice Clark's participation in this issue extended far beyond that of cover artist. She also served as author, illustrator, consultant and guest editor. For all her help, the regular staff hereby extends its most appreciative thanks.

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DOROTHY GRANT



NEELY GADDIS

was named for her. She made many begonia hybrids that are known country-wide. Among them are: B. 'Palomar', B. 'Druryi' (a family name), B. 'Lulu Bower', a rare creation with orange-tinted flowers that honors her mother and an equally lovely one that bears her own name.

In 1958, she submitted the following article to THE BEGONIAN, but it was returned as more suited to San Diego readers. Lost for several years, it was relocated in time to be presented here, a year after Miss Bower's death in 1972. It is appropriate to publish her story now partly as a memorial to her and the heritage of beautiful begonia hybrids she left us, and partly because on July 28th and 29th the Alfred D. Robinson Branch of the A.B.S., to which Miss Bower belonged for its first thirty years, is holding its first Begonia and Shade Plant Show in Casa del Prado, Balboa Park.

Connie's recollections will bring back vivid memories to those who knew her quiet gracious presence. Those who did not have that privilege will enjoy a graphic picture of an enthusiastic begonian in the San Diego of the early nineteen hundreds.

A.M.C.

EARLY BEGONIA GROWERS

IN SAN DIEGO

CONSTANCE DRURY BOWER

MISS KATE SESSIONS and my mother were friends before I was born. All through my life I kept her loving interest. As a small child our Sunday drives in the phaeton to see her nursery were highlights. It was situated at the far northwest corner of Balboa Park, near where the Marston home was later built. From there she moved the nursery to Mission Hills. Her first greenhouse was downtown on the corner of Fifth and C streets, where the Kress Company is now located. There was just a vacant lot across from there to Fourth Street where we lived.

In 1911, I was secretary to R. F. Paine, chief Scripps editorial writer for the SUN. About then the begonia horizon began to open up for me and there was Miss Sessions right in the middle. Through her, I met the Frank Waite and W. L. Frevert families who were ardent begonia and lathhouse fans. They were clamoring for someone in San Diego to raise begonias for sale. Hitherto, seed and plant catalogues from the East, Middle West and that of Mrs. Shepherd's of Ventura, were about our only sources. Mrs. Waite brought a few begonias with her when she moved to

CALIFORNIA GARDEN



B. x Braemar

Sketches by Alice Clark courtesy of THE BEGONIAN

FOREWORD:

CONNIE D. BOWER, who lived here most of her life, was born in San Diego in 1892. An ardent gardener, specializing first in begonias and later in succulents and saintpaulias, she was so highly regarded in her favorite field that a fine miniature species, *B. boweriae*,

California. She used to tell how she carried a bouquet of Begonia 'Chateau Rocher' blossoms when she was married.

So, Kate Sessions oblidged us by raising and stocking begonias. I bought my first begonias from her: *Odorata alba* and *rosea*, Marjorie Daw, Madame de Lesseps, *Weltonensis alba* and others. Mr. Vickery, a nurseryman who worked part time for Miss Sessions then, began growing begonias commercially.

The Waites lived at 30th and Broadway—quite a walk from any approach, but I often made the trip. She never sold plants, but her husband did, upon occasion. He toted me home via horse and buggy with my first exciting cuttings and plant purchases. The most showy of them was B. 'President Carnot'. Mr. Waite was editor of the SAN DIEGO SUN at this time. From then on I listened to Mrs. Waite's words of begonia wisdom. From her, I heard of the orange-flowered wonder, *Begonia dichroa*. B. 'Gigantea rosea' was a special favorite as well as the rubras and bamboo types. She loved the floribundas too and raised fine seedlings. There I saw my first Rex Begonia. How we pored over Mrs. Shepherd's lists as well as those of Harrison's and Schmidt's.

Soon I met Mrs. Orrell Fleetwood, Chauncy Vedder and the Hermances. Then Alfred D. Robinson became an acquaintance. He had been growing begonias in his greenhouse for some time. He was invited to a meeting at the Frevert home on upper Fifth Avenue with other begoniasts. That was really the beginning of begonia organization in San Diego. Later, I visited the Houghton home in Los Angeles and was most enthused over wall baskets of *B. imperialis* and *B. smaragdina* that



B. 'Lulu Bower'

grew beautifully, attached to the outside of his sheltered garage. Evidently they were taken indoors during the winter. We in San Diego were nursing along small ones in pots often covered by glass. I was much impressed by those baskets and vowed we could do it too.

The beautiful, orderly and interesting Frevert garden and partly glassed adjoining room, fascinated me. I saw Rex Begonia leaves prepared for propagation for the first time. I copied their covered sand box and have never rooted begonia cuttings better than in that first one. For evening parties the garden was always gaily decorated with Japanese lanterns lighted with candles before electricity was available. One of the joys of visiting with the Freverts was a chat with their daughter, Brooke, now Mrs. M.L. Miller. At Mrs. Fleetwood's, I met my first saintpaulias, gesnerias and achimines. I also saw a copy of George Park's catalogue listing seeds at five cents a package. I will admit that some of those packets did not contain too many seeds! The largest and loveliest *B. picta alba* I ever saw was one growing in a bin of

leafmold which Mrs. Fleetwood favored for big plants. She and Mrs. Waite grew many begonias from seed. Mrs. Waite never pollinated flowers but planted come-by-chance seed, some of which produced fine varieties.

Mr. Vedder and his plant family lived at the upper corner of First Avenue and Fir Street. In nearly every room of his three-story home, he displayed dear-to-his-heart tiny and large plants. No small cutting, plant, or seed pod of anything escaped his tender care. It was from him that I learned to respect other types of growth which I had never noticed before. Mother and I loved to visit there and were grateful for the knowledge he shared with us.

Mrs. Fleetwood and I made our first call on Mrs. Hermance together. She and her son lived on Kearny Avenue where they owned a good sized lathhouse and some lathed begonia shelters. Large tubs of procumbent begonias were predominant. Outside of Rexes, I have never seen such brilliancy in begonia leafage as on a row of B. 'Jessie' that grew outdoors along the north side of their house.

Meantime, Mr. Robinson commenced to grow begonias commercially. Heretofore he had specialized in fine roses, dahlias and other beautiful flowers which he exhibited at our flower show. He was a fascinating speaker at the Floral Association meetings which we attended. It was his first wife, Marion, who stirred my interest in ferns and gave me many starts of them. We all know what grand begonias were propagated at Rosecroft and shared with the world at large.

Conveyance to Point Loma was different those days. Both Mr. Robinson and my boss, who lived directly across Silvergate Avenue from him, often took a boat for home. They boarded the launch at the foot of H Street and were carried to the Loma Portal dock. If they were lucky someone would meet them with a car. If not, they would climb up the steep hill. Another longer way was up the Canyon Road and over the hills to Silvergate. Between the climb and the stiff ocean breeze, they often arrived somewhat winded. I favored a streetcar over the launch though it did take longer.

During these early years of begonia enthusiasm, the William Grants of East San Diego began growing and selling begonias. I prevailed upon them to name some of their new seedlings after their daughters—Dorothy, Elaine and Margery as well as Frieda, after Mrs. Grant.

Mrs. Gray's daughter, Ethel Calloway, in La Jolla, Charles Cass, William Decker, Mrs. Fred Scripps and others here joined in making San Diego begonias famous.

Now we are leaving the past and merging into the really big begonia doings of the American Begonia Society with a large membership extending even into foreign lands. Pardon me, for stopping by the wayside with my dear old memories of early begonia growers in San Diego.

ELEGANT



Propagator Andy Brown, Sr. with 'Schwabenland Berstein's Geibe'.

ON A QUIET COUNTRY ROAD, in Cardiff-by-the-Sea, north of San Diego, the glasshouses of Andy Brown, Sr. and Jr. are overflowing with an unforgettable scene of colorful beauty. Hundreds of Rieger 'Elatior' Begonias, ranging in color from delicate lime yellow to brilliant Christmas red are grown for the wholesale trade. The Browns released the first of these elegant begonias in early 1972. They created an immediate sensation.

The first time I saw them I realized they must be an improved form of Begonia 'Hiemalis'. I was amazed to be told that they were fibrous-rooted lacking in tuberous parentage, continuous bloomers and mildew resistant.

During the many years I have collected begonias, the winter-flowering group known as Begonia 'Hiemalis' has often been included in my collection. They are rather small bushy plants with fibrous roots often slightly swollen into tubers because of their tuberous parentage. They are usually sterile plants with flowers in various colors which range from white through pink and apricot to crimson and scarlet. The flowers can be single, semi-double, or double. They have one blooming period and are very susceptible to mildew.

Winter-flowering begonias are considered difficult to grow. Great caution must be used when the plant finishes flowering and starts into its resting period.

'ELATIOR'

BEGONIAS

THELMA O'REILLY

One must attempt to keep some of the foliage in good condition until the appearance of new shoots in the leaf axils or at the soil level. If the plant dies completely back before new growth starts it is usually fatal.

After adding several of the Rieger 'Elatior' Begonias to my collection last summer, I decided to research them thoroughly and share the information so that growers and collectors would have more knowledge about their origin and culture.

B. socotrana was collected in 1880 on the island of Socotra which is located in the Indian Ocean. It has an underground tuber which is formed of bulbils and displays its lovely rose-pink flowers in the winter.

The firm of Veitch in Chelsea, Britain, was responsible for the first winter-flowering begonias which had their origin from hybrids of the Andean tuberous species crossed with *B. socotrana*. The first 'Elatior' begonia, 'John Heal', was exhibited in 1885. From 1885 until 1935, J. Veitch & Sons and W. Clibran & Sons of Britain were responsible for most of the hybridizing of 'Elatior' begonias.

From 1930 to 1960 the Dutch growers introduced most of the new and improved varieties with J. Baardse at Aalsmeer, Netherlands, being the largest contributor.

In 1955, the German breeder, O. Rieger at Nurtigen, introduced the 'Elatior' begonia, 'Riegers' 'Leuchfeuer' which was the first of many fine varieties. The varieties resulted from a breeding program started in 1928, and they surpass the older varieties in improved qualities of floriferousness, mildew resistance and compact growth.

Referred to as "Winter-flowering begonia hybrids" in British literature, they are called 'Elatior' begonias in continental Western Europe. Since 1933, when Karl Albert Fotsch included all forms of this group under the name Begonia 'Hiemalis' (Winter-flowering). They have been known in the United States as 'Hiemalis' begonias.

Everyone who has one of the beautiful improved 'Elatior' begonias in his collection is anxious to learn how he can keep it well and happy. As a result of excellent cooperation from several knowledgeable persons combined with the results of my own experiences, I have some important information to share about their culture.

A well drained mix that retains moisture is essential and at least 25% peat moss is suggested. A coarse, loose mix of equal parts of leafmold (or your own special soil mix), peatmoss and perlite or vermiculite

should be suitable.

Rieger begonias may be grown in clay or plastic pots. The hanging varieties grow well in moss-lined baskets. When commercial growers release plants, they are usually in five or six-inch pots. If the plant is pot-bound, shift it to the next size and feed with a slow release fertilizer. This should be sufficient repotting for your first full bloom cycle.

The commercial grower keeps the plants between 65 and 70 degrees for vegetative growth and flower bud initiation. Then the temperatures can be reduced to 60 degrees. For the begonia collectors in southern California who grow in outdoor lathhouses, the nights may be a little cool and the days a little on the warm side, but the plants will respond sufficiently to give satisfactory results. The past winter was extremely



'Aphrodite Pink'



'Aphrodite Rose'



'Schwabenland Berstein's Geibe'

wet and cold (twenty-three nights below freezing in my garden). Only two out of ten 'Elatior' begonias succumbed. So, they can take it!

Never expose these begonias to direct sunlight. They must have enough shade from summer sun to prevent flower scalding and leaf marginal burning. 'Elatior' begonias demand good ventilation and low relative humidity. They must be watered thoroughly to prevent salt build-up.

Testing has shown that severe leaf burn occurs when cygon sprays or drenches and malathion or parathion sprays are applied to plants. To prevent nematodes and bacterial leaf spot keep the foliage dry and pick off and destroy any infected foliage which has blister-like, water-soaked appearing spots on the leaves. Mildew can be prevented by providing a low relative humidity. Doo spray has proven an effective mildew control on my plants. Others have used Polytryp with success.

'Elatior' begonias are not heavy feeders. A tablespoon of 14-14-14 Osmocote to a five inch pot is sufficient. I should like to mention that Osmocote is a new slow release fertilizer that has become very popular with commercial growers. It is highly recommended. Unfortunately, it is not available in this area in small quantities. In attempting to tract it down, I contacted Bob Bichowsky of Butler's Mill. He was very sympathetic when I explained the problem of writing an article and recommending a product that was only obtainable in fifty pound bags. For the begonia enthusiasts he kindly offered to make it available in smaller packages at Butler's Mill. For those who prefer to liquid feed, one ounce of 20-

20-20 fertilizer per three gallons of water once a week should be satisfactory.

When your Rieger begonia appears to be reaching the end of its flowering cycle, keep a constant check for new bottom growth. When it appears, the plant is ready for a "haircut". With a strong heart and steady hand, prune all growth back to about four inches. Sprinkle Osmocote on soil and wait for your begonia to start a new growth cycle. If your plant reaches this point in the early spring, I suggest removing some of the soil and repotting in a smaller container, gradually moving it up to the six-inch pot.

Propagation is easy from leaf or tip cuttings. Leaves inserted in peat moss or the recommended potting mix make the fullest plants.

Rieger 'Elatior' begonias are patented plants. One firm located in Ohio is the sole distributor in the United States and Canada.

Varieties for hanging baskets each beginning with 'Aphrodite' include: 'Pink', 'Rose', 'Cherry Red' and 'Amoena'. Upright growing varieties starting with 'Schwabenland' are: 'Red', 'Orange', 'Pink', 'Berstein's Geibe' (lime-yellow), 'Goldlachs' (cut-leaf, light orange flowers), 'Kerfeld Orange' (bronze foliage) and 'Crispa' (large red flowers). Elegant Rieger 'Elatior' begonias are available at your favorite nursery or florist, any of the above varieties will make a wonderful addition to your garden.

Antonelli Brothers

TUBEROUS BEGONIAS

2545 Capitola Road
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36-page color catalog 25 cents

FERNS—THE FINISHING TOUCH

MARGARET and RAYMOND SODOMKA

NO SHADE PLANT GARDEN is complete without a finishing touch of a few feathery ferns. They not only add their own individual beauty, they also contrast handsomely with begonias, fuchsias, bromeliads, azaleas, camellias and other shade plants. Ferns come in a variety of form and texture. They can be tiny or huge, dainty or coarse, delicate or hardy. Some are giant trees, as in Hawaii. They are sometimes aquatic. The epiphytic type (staghorn) grows on trees, not as a parasite but as a resident. It grows in jungles and must obtain all its light, moisture and food in its treetop home. Bird droppings are its principal nourishment.

In a shade garden one may use many different ferns, but one should be selective in choosing the best specimens. Ferns that become too large have to be removed all too soon. Most tree ferns fit this category. An exception is *Dicksonia antarctica* which is a lovely, slow-growing tree that will grace your garden for many years without becoming over-sized.

Staghorn ferns are generally mounted on a slab of redwood, cork or osmunda. A nest of sphagnum moss, held in place with chicken wire, will suffice to house a stag. You must hang it on a lathhouse wall or a tree to simulate its natural habitat, and you must give it water, food and filtered sunlight. Do not count on birds to feed it! (They do nest in a stag occasionally.) The best stags for the shade garden here are: *Platycerium grande* and *P. bifurcatum*. They adapt readily to our climate. You may try other varieties, but they usually require special handling and gradual hardening to the outdoor temperatures.

Basket ferns are the easiest, and perhaps the most delightful, to cultivate. Maidenhair ferns love to grow in baskets. For sheer pleasure on a hot day, no other plant can remind you of a shady glen-like atmosphere as can the maidenhair fern. They will grow in the ground (they are often found on shady banks of streams) but in our dry climate they seem to do better in a basket where you can water them profusely and then let them drain. Humidity is what they crave, not wet feet. Varieties that do well in baskets in our area are: *Adiantum Fritz Luthii*, *A. Pacific Maid*, *A. Lady Geneva*, *A. hispidulum*—among others. *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, *A. formosum* and *A. pedatum* may be planted in the ground and will thrive. Crushed oyster shells will provide lime for maidenhairs and other black-stemmed ferns like pellaeas. *Pellaea falcatum*, *P. atropurpurea*, *P. rotundifolia* and *P. viridis* are good varieties to consider adding to your

fern collection.

Another fine basket fern is the davallia. A very popular member of this family is *D. fijeensis*. There are several cultivars of this variety (*plumosa* and *majus*) which are extremely handsome. A related fern is *Humata tyermannii*. It has attractive white feet which climb around the sides of the basket, eventually covering it completely.

Polystichum setosum is an excellent fern to plant in the ground. Its shiny green fronds and hairy stems will blend beautifully with flowering shade plants. The Holly Fern (*Cyrtomium falcatum*) will provide a sturdy background to delicate plants needing a bit of protection.

Two climbing ferns you might like are *Lygodium japonicum* and *Stenochlaena palustris*. Both can be trained on a trellis or a totem pole. The first is dainty and feathery; the latter is coarse and leathery.

As you can see, there is a fern for everyone. With over ten thousand kinds to choose from, why not enjoy their unique charm in your shade garden.



Polystichum setosum



Adiantum capillus-veneris

THE PRACTICAL FUCHSIA

ANNABELLE STUBBS

HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED the fuchsia as a "practical" plant? Probably not, as we usually regard these fragile appearing brilliant blooms as delicate and exotic. However, the fuchsia can be a sturdy and dependable shrub, giving a bright color accent much of the year. Some upright fuchsias such as CHECKERBOARD are seldom out of bloom except right after pruning. There is a noticeable increase in interest in the upright varieties this year—possibly because of their use as landscaping subjects for the many new homes. The fuchsia GARTENMEISTER BONDTEDT is one that is used so often that sometimes it is not even recognized as a fuchsia. It is commonly referred to as the "firecracker" which is quite descriptive. AMY LYE also makes a large bush and can be grown in full sun on the coast.



Unusual blossoms of *Corymbiflora alba*.

It was interesting to notice in the American Fuchsia Society's All Time Best rating report, which was published in May 1973, the fuchsia SWINGTIME appeared on both the upright and trailing lists. The position on the upright list was seventh, and the position in the trailing list was first. This is not surprising to most fuchsia growers, as SWINGTIME is probably the best known and most widely distributed fuchsia on the market today.

There are also many of the newer cultivars that deserve consideration in the "practical" classification. The variety is sometimes confusing because of the number of cultivars being presented each year; however, there are always certain ones that stand out to a particular individual, and this is what makes a private collection so interesting. The grower can



AMY LYE a five feet tall shrub growing in full sun in Leucadia.



BRIGHT EYES

achieve many different and lovely designs, both formal and informal, with the wide spectrum of color and form.

It is best when starting with a small new cultivar to view it from a flexible standpoint. Sometimes the difference in growing methods, climate, water, light exposure and fertilizer will produce a stiff upright when you expect a trailer, or vice-versa. When you can observe a mature plant grown in your area, you can be more certain of growth habits. Also, training methods are employed for certain forms. If you want to produce a certain effect, inquire about the training that was practiced.

Two of the most important techniques in fuchsia culture are often completely unknown to the novice fuchsia grower. They are pruning and pinching. The pruning is usually done in late fall or early spring, but the pinching must be done regularly when growing a four inch or gallon plant, particularly for a basket. This consists of pinching out the tip of each branch. This forces out new growth and makes a full basket with many branches instead of a basket with maybe six or eight long vine-like branches. This pinching should be continued until the plant is full and well shaped and then should be discontinued and the plant allowed to come into full bloom. The pinching technique is also used on upright fuchsias but is usually not as vital as with a basket.

The location of the fuchsia in the garden is also of great importance. Many fuchsias will not tolerate full sun or heat over eighty degrees for prolonged periods. When purchasing your fuchsias, inquire as to sun and heat tolerance. The salesperson will usually be able to give you information on these important points. Fuchsias usually prefer filtered sun. One of the fun things about fuchsia collecting is discovering something that has not been in good supply, or not avail-

able when it was introduced, such as some of the fuchsias from other countries; or even just some fuchsia that for some reason failed to register with you. We have acquired several this year that we especially admire. HULA GIRL is one we almost overlooked last year, and this year it put on a real show. A huge red and white double trailer with reddish foliage and long arching branches. SWANLEY GEM is a little darling with small single blooms that open flat with red sepals and blue corolla. It is an upright but will make a stiff compact basket when pinched heavily.

The 1973 fuchsia introductions we have seen thus far this year are: ANGEL'S DREAM, large double trailer, pink sepals and full white corolla with pink petaloids, heavy bloomer; BRIGHT EYES, small semi-trailer or pot plant, pink sepals, silvery blue double corolla with four distinct swirls in the center like PINK QUARTET; CLASSY, medium sized upright double, white tube and sepals, bright red corolla; DOCTOR BOWMAN, very small upright single in shades of red; FIRST LADY, large double clear pink with heavy substance and dark green foliage; GEORGIA PEACH, medium double trailer, white sepals, peachy pink corolla; ICHIBAN, huge double trailer multi-colored purple and pink, pink sepals, large lush foliage; SHELIA, large double upright in shades of pink.

During periods of high heat, remember that the temperature in your lathhouse or patio can be brought down by wetting down the pathways, benches and all areas around your plants. Remember that fuchsias do not like to stand in water, so do not overwater. This can be as fatal as drying out.

Visit your local fuchsia society for information on specific problems or just for fun. The various groups are friendly and welcome visitors.



Annabelle Stubbs with her 1973 introduction ANGEL'S DREAM.

BUSY BEGONIA HYBRIDIZERS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

ALICE CLARK

EVEN BEFORE THE 1915 Exposition in Balboa Park the begonia story can be traced in the pages of CALIFORNIA GARDEN. Articles by A. D. Robinson, Connie Bower and others noted the progress in new introductions that made this area known across the country and abroad as the hub of Begonia-land. The first booklet in English about begonias was written by Eva Kenworthy Gray, a local grower. Eventually there was a lapse in begonia popularity here, due perhaps to the fickleness of human nature or the advent of hard Metropolitan water. More lovelies came out of the East than the West. Now it is time to announce that San Diego County fanciers are stepping along with the best, and it is fitting to tell the who and the what of it.

A day spent in a begonia paradise, the hillside lathhouse of Paul and Margaret Lee, allowed me to study, in one location, most of the innovations of our local hybridizers since 1950. It was difficult to concentrate on this project in the midst of a tantalizing array of all kinds of fascinating plants, but the helpfulness of the Lees in bringing the new begonias to me and even the seed parents, so their characteristics could be traced in the hybrids, kept me in line. Their's was the selfless effort given only by dedicated gardeners.

Timewise, one of the first hybridizers to lead the new parade was Virgil Stark of San Diego. His outstanding Begonia 'San Miguel' was introduced in 1935, and it is still going strong. Those last two words describe it best for it is a truly hearty grower that overflows its location high and wide, with big felted gray/green leaves and noticeable brown stipules mindful of *B. venosa*, but the leaf form and the plum-colored backs and the hairy white blooms on long stems all relate to *B. scharffiana*, its parent. After this plant was in circulation, it was found that a slightly different begonia, grown from seed distributed through the Clayton Kelly seed fund, had been growing in San Francisco many years earlier. Several years after World War I, a begonia was developed in France from the same parents and named B. 'General Jacques'. Since the origin of the San Francisco plant could not be authenticated, and the French plant had become extinct many years before, the local San Miguel Begonia Branch, for whom it was named, still claims it is a legitimate hybrid, as it was accepted for registration by the American Begonia Society.

When Dorothy S. Behrends, of Encinitas, was growing begonias, she had a lathhouse and patio full of handsome plants. She was also a writer, lecturer,

show judge and past editor of THE BEGONIAN. In 1954, she registered her hybrid B. 'Encinitas' as a cross between *B. hydrocotylifolia* and B. 'Fred Brown'. In 1960, Dorothy wrote an outstanding, much-needed book, BEGONIAS SLANTED TOWARDS THE BEGINNER. In it, she describes her rhizomatous begonia as "producing a chatoyant black/green surface and a rich dark red underside to the leaves when grown in subdued light.....It branches freely, propagates readily.....and is well recommended as a house plant." She also introduced B. 'Zuebrae', a fibrous cross of B. 'Braemar' and B. 'Zuensis' which has the distinctive hairs of the latter and the semi-shiny leaf surface of the former. It is dark red on the undersides. A full grower, excellent for wall baskets.

San Diego Begonians are proud of Mrs. Behrends for the prestige she has brought to the county by the success of her informative and practical book as well as by her hybrids.

After the Donald Hunters took over Rosecroft



Mrs. Donald Hunter with B. 'Maytime'.

Begonia Gardens on Point Loma, their son Jerry became interested in begonias. He made several hybrids before he left for the Korean War. His mother cared for them and one, B. 'Dutchman's Breeches', a cross of *B. dichroa* by *B. undulata*, named for the shape of the female bloom, was registered, but it is no longer available. Tall cane types from the same seed were named B. 'Lily of the Valley', B. 'Flamingo' and B. 'Oriole', whose bird-call Kathryn warbles so well. They still grow at Rosecroft.

B. 'Maytime', listed in the Buxton index of 1958, is holding its own. It is a graceful, ranging, hairy fibrous that shows its *B. scharffiana* heritage in large pointed oval olive-green, white haired leaves with red veined backs. Red petioles have white hairs as do the red peduncles carrying large sprays of white flowers so covered with ruby hairs that seem to glow. Several plants of B. 'Maytime' reign serenely in Rosecroft. It is worth a trip to see them.

Meanwhile Jerry has a thriving nursery and landscape business of his own in Pacific Beach while his parents preside over the twirling-skirted fuchsias and tuberous begonias that serve like a carpet of oriental colors on the floor of the glorious garden of Rosecroft.

A person whose hobby takes him from concrete and wood to foliage and flowers is Wally Watchorn, a contractor in Oceanside, who has devoted his spare time to begonias for over fifteen years. Actually, he is too busy to name and register the worthy hybrids that crowd his lathhouse. The following of his varieties are in the trade.

B. 'Ginny', named for his wife, is tall and bushy like B. 'Margaritae', one of its parents, but its hairy rosy blooms are more floriferous.

B. 'Oceanside' is a fine rhizomatous with medium serrated leaves and hairy edges. The pale sinus becomes a dazzling star against the dark green and brown of its top side and the laquer red below. It has lovely pink blooms.

B. 'Paulana' is a large shrubby type. The shape of the very dark hairy leaves, the pale veins and center and the flowers with red hairs are like its *B. scharffiana* parent, but the leaf texture relates to *B. paulensis*.

The background of the sister begonias 'Monday', 'Tuesday', and 'Wednesday' is unknown, but their shiny puckered hairy surfaces suggest *B. paulensis*, which also has red hairs on the back. B. 'Monday' received the 1969 award for the most distinctive new fibrous.

B. 'Carlsbad' is a different rhizomatous. Small shiny round compact leaves of apple-green have strong brown splashes near the center, with dribbles of the same over and under the leaf. It has short-stemmed pink flowers, no hairs.

A cross of *B. heracleifolia* by B. 'Nora Bedson' produced two named rhizomatous varieties. B. 'Crazy Quilt', with medium to large leaves, spotted like the male parent, is noted for its large pink-flushed bloom



B. 'Ginny' and hybridizer, Wally Watchorn.

on long stems. B. 'Moon Eagle' has dark leaves with a bird-like flutter.

B. 'Jet Star' claims attention with its almost black satiny seven-pointed medium leaves that silhouette the pale green stars centers. Blood-red backs and red-spotted petioles are striking as are the long stems of rich coral-red flowers.

Perhaps Wally is best known for his B. 'Tahitian Sunset', a bushy rex with ruffled leaves up to nine inches. Brown veins are flanked by irregular chocolate sections before breaking into silver and jade areas, flushed cerise. Scalloped edges are caught with lavender-spotted wedges of dark green. The helix turn at the center is like a double picky-back. The under-leaf has a beautiful network of red veins against a pale green background. This rhapsody of color won the Hartwell Cup in 1972 for the best rex.

Here's hoping that the time will come when Wally will have leisure to name more of his outstanding begonias.

Thelma O'Reilly, of La Mesa, made a name for herself in researching as well as judging, lecturing and writing on begonias before she did any hybridizing. In 1965, she crossed B. 'Nora Bedson', a new English hybrid with a strain of *B. boweriae* in it, with B. 'Leslie Lynn'. To show their relationship she linked the

best resultant seedlings together under names of constellations.

The first of the series to be registered in 1968 was B. 'Universe'. The veins on its four by six Kelly-green leaves emerge from light green sinuses in accents like the dark brown spokes of a wheel. More scattered markings make extended star patterns on their way to the toast-colored margins. White flowers with pink-tinted buds sway forth in the spring. This popular plant received the ABS Award and the John Thieben Trophy as the outstanding new rhizomatous hybrid of 1969.

B. 'Aries', a modified star type, has large grass-green leaves with seven light green veins streaking out from the pale sinuses to dark brown borders, from which other sepia notes cut inward like those on a butterfly wing. From March to May, two-tone flowers with round petals rise on foot-long stems.

Leaf backs of deep red indicate the influence of B. 'Leslie Lynn' on Thelma's B. 'Virgo'. It has six-inch velvety dark olive-green leaves, scalloped to points, pale green sinuses echoed by large stipules of like color and bright rosy-pink blooms with a heavenly aroma.

Another favorite in this group is B. 'Neptune' whose broad firm-textured star-cut leaf has both sinus and veins deeply indented, with thick etchings of brown on the margins. Identification is easy because of a fine red peppering over both surfaces. The rhizomes stem upward.

Also in this category is B. 'Aquarius', with small to medium cut leaves of a deep lustrous unspotted green, light sinuses and brown-stitched edges. B. 'Gemini' has a light green leaf with red to brown margin and a pinkish-copper flush.

The already popular B. 'Mercury' bears crisp satiny four by seven green leaves that are asymmetrical, elongated and ruffled. Dancing margins are fused smokey-red. Light green veins are splashed red. A long season of coral blooms open from red buds on tall stems. Stipules, edged red, are hairy and triangular.

B. 'Polaris', from selfed B. 'Leslie Lynn' seed, has large bright green leaves, somewhat cut, with narrow gay-red borders.

A planting of tuberous species seed in 1969 did so well that results were passed on to friends. Later a "Share and Compare" project was instigated that was so much fun that the attractive hybrid was called B. 'Lark'.

Crossing *B. olbia* by *B. dregei* produced a tall thick stemmed plant with velvety leaves and very large white flowers that hung in big clusters for so long that it became B. 'Bangles'. This unusual begonia won a trophy at the 1972 ABS National Show.

From a seed fund planting of *B. olsoniae* by *B. listida*, Thelma raised B. 'Oh No'. Its shrubby leaves



Mrs. O'Reilly and shade plant display at 1973 Expo.

have a velvet texture, with pink hairs on both sides. The topside is very dark greenish-brown, maroon below. Veins are banded in chartreuse. The white flowers bloom a long time. B. 'Oh No' is very good in baskets. All of these O'Reilly hybrids should have a big bright future.

For twenty years or more Margaret Lee has devoted her extra time to begonia groups. She writes for magazines, including this one, judges begonia shows, lectures and raises prize specimens. Her husband, Peter Paul Lee, became her enthusiastic cohort when he retired.

It was Paul who produced B. 'Purple Petticoat', the first rex to win the A. D. Robinson Memorial Medal for the best begonia distributed from 1958 to 1963. Grown in 1960, it has won top honors whenever exhibited. It was featured in full color on THE BEGONIAN cover for July 1972 and was described the following month. Its silvered leaf is cut by many veins bordered on each side by irregular green streaks that seem to make wide paths to the reddish-purple margins which only show red underneath. Like a chorus girl's skirt, the center of the leaf turns up in a saucy flirt. Truly a "go-getter" rex.

Another of his rex cultorum is called B. 'Patapsco', for a river in Maryland. A dark plum chance seedling with silver-spotted and raspberry-tinted center, it ends in a green margin with a cut purple edge. Red hairs on stems and leaf backs are characteristics.

The Lee's latest rex has rolling leaves of silver dipped in a rich plum frosting from middle to edges.

Named for the friend who cared for the seedling, it has been knighted B. 'Sir Edward Hodgins'.

One of Marge's pets is a miniature rhizomatous, B. 'Smidgens', a chance seedling with *B. boweriae* traits. The small pointed apple-green leaf has brown lines and pink flowers. She has kept it as a lovely basket for twelve years without repotting.

Some time ago Marie Turner named a cane hybrid, B. 'Elizabeth Lockhart'. From its seed, the Lees have a group called B. 'Encanto, Grex', which has bronzy leaves. Another is B. 'Misty'. The straight-edged leaf is long and wide, pea-green around the veins and misted all over with silver.

I lost my heart to B. 'Lana'. She is like B. 'Sophie Cecile', but the very dark green leaves open out smoother on top so the silver splashes, overlaid with lavender, are very visible. It is more compact, easier to grow, lasts longer, and the coral flower is earlier. It was named for its foster-mother Lana Schone, a fine grower of the San Miguel Branch.

B. 'Cinco de Mayo' is another rhizomatous with B. 'Nora Bedson' parentage. It is hard to distinguish from B. 'Universe' except that the flower stems are more upright, and the leaves cup as they age.

One of the Lee plants, difficult to grow, is as intriguing as its name, B. 'Phantom'. The tall canes have swollen bases. The leaf is tightly pleated until

it emerges a dark green with pointed cut edges and odd silver markings, that often vanish later as does the leaf!

These are some of the on-coming San Diego County hybrids. How does one choose among so many Begonia Beauties that are reviving our old-time reputation?



Margaret and Paul Lee in their patio.

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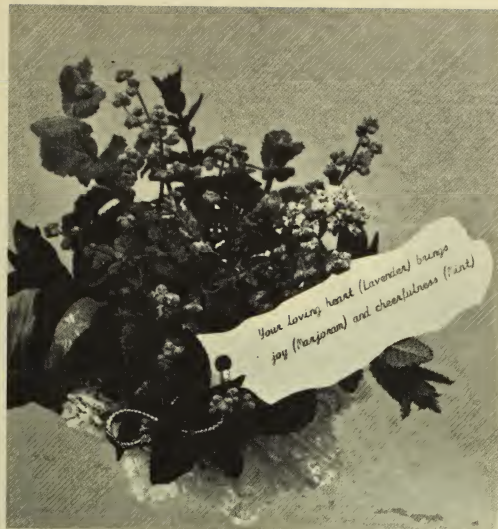
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THE LANGUAGE



HOW MANY WAYS there are to begin a love story! As far back as the earth first yielded up a bright blossom or a fragrant herb, flowers have played a main role. They have been used as symbols asking for, or declaring, love and devotion and accepting or rejecting it depending on the bit of twig or flower or green thing used. They were painted on the walls at Knossos; the ancient Greeks understood the art of sending messages by a nosegay; and Tutankhamen's little wife gently laid a blossom on all the golden glory of his burial attire as her last gesture of love.

It was in the Far East, however, that a real language was compiled. Every bud and blossom was endowed



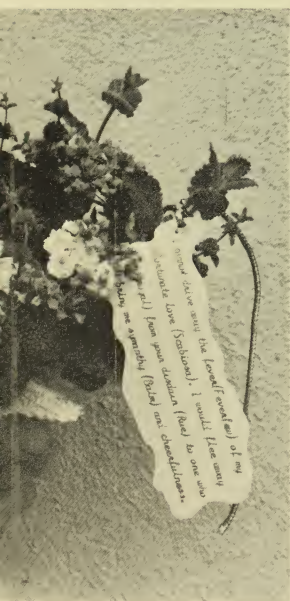
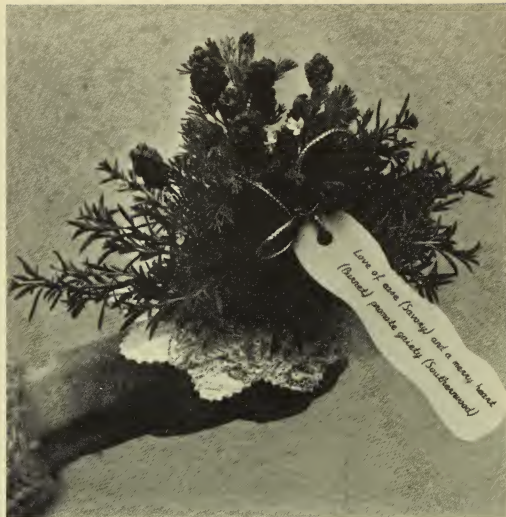
OF FLOWERS

JOSEPHINE GRAY

ARRANGEMENTS BY AUTHOR
GUNTHER PHOTOS

with a meaning so that even complicated messages might be sent by way of a bouquet. It's interesting to speculate on the gradual beginnings; perhaps the young harem wives were bored by the way each day poured into the next with equal monotony. Out of a lap full of flowers a girl held up a daisy and a rose—"How innocent and how beautiful." At first the significance would be quite obvious and only when the game caught on would the interpretations become more complex.

Perhaps too, the girls were not able to read and write so this proved a means of communicating bits of gossip or malice easily and casually. If nettle and





larkspur tied together with sprigs of basil and rue were left on Aziza's silk cushion, it meant: "You are cruel and haughty, and I hate and disdain you." In Turkey and Arabia, the language became so complicated that the meaning was not in the flower itself but in its capacity for rhyming with another word. "Floriography" reached its height during the Victorian era because of a collection of letters published in 1763. They had been written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu whose husband was ambassador to Turkey in the early eighteenth century; she was interested in all sorts of local customs which included the way the Turks used symbols to convey a message. In one of her letters she wrote: "There is no color, no flower, no weed, no fruit, herb, pebble or feather that has not a verse belonging to it; you may quarrel, reproach, or send letters of passion, friendship or civility—even news—without inking your fingers." However, it was half a century after her death before the idea of a "language of flowers" was picked up and enlarged upon in England. In fact, it was enlarged to such a degree that it became almost ridiculous. Little dictionaries were written giving the meaning of every flower, many of them in conflict, depending on the

author. For example, one little book gives lavender as meaning love and strength of heart; another says that it means distrust, and still another, luck. Rue can mean sorrow or regret as well as understanding or disdain. It must have been quite confusing unless everybody used the same dictionary. If you sent a girl a tussie-mussie with rue in it intending to tell her that you admired her understanding, and she read it to mean disdain because she had the wrong dictionary—you were in trouble!

Here are a few samples which you can make up for your friends. For a birthday: "Happiness (marjoram) on your birth (dittany of Crete) day! I think of you (blue salvia) with true friendship (rosemary) and a warmth of feeling (peppermint)."

"I cannot drive away the fever (feverfew) of my unfortunate love (scabiosa). I would flee away (pennyroyal) from your disdain (rue) to one who will bring me sympathy (balm) and cheerfulness (mint)."

Putting them together is like working a puzzle. Here is a short list to play with which were culled from a number of little dictionaries.

Angelica—Protection, inspiration.

Alyssum—Worth beyond beauty.

Bay Leaf—Honor, fame, victory, 'I change but in death'.

Coriander—Concealed merit.

Balm—Sympathy, comfort.

Dill—Casts a spell.

Forget-me-not—True love.

Hyssop—Cleanliness, sacrifice.

Rose—Love, beauty.

Sage—Domestic virtue, wisdom, long life.

Thyme—Courage, strength, truth.

Nutmeg geranium—Unexpected meeting.

Lemon geranium—Expected meeting, zest.

Honeysuckle—Generosity, devotion, affection.

Wormwood—Absence.

It is strange to think that marriages may have been made, pretty girls turned into bitter "old maids", hearts broken and mended by means of a little handful of flowers and herbs carefully put together and as carefully and breathlessly read, and perhaps misinterpreted. No Victorian beau would ever tell a young lady that he had not meant to address her with serious intentions when, in return for what she understood as a proposal, she sent him a moss rose and a clean white garden daisy surrounded by a little collar of bay leaves. Unfortunate gallant, trapped for life by a nosegay!

BROMELIADS IN THE SHADE GARDEN

MARY BIRCHELL

IN CALIFORNIA, outdoor living is an important part of our lives. It may be a patio, a lathhouse, or a tree-shaded area. It is always a place that is comfortable for people as well as plants.

Most often the shade garden has ferns, begonias, fuchsias and other shade-loving plants, but why not bromeliads? They will create interest as well as beauty in your garden.

In studying your shade garden, you will find deep shade areas, areas with filtered light, areas with morning or afternoon sun. (The noonday sun should be filtered.) There are bromeliads for all areas in such a shade garden.

Most bromeliads like filtered light. Usually, those with soft, green leaves prefer the most shade. The soft leafed bromeliads with colorful markings on the foliage thrive in a little more light. The tougher, rougher textured leaves will take stronger light to look their best.

After you have decided on the conditions needed to make your bromeliads happy, you will want to arrange them in a manner to please you and enhance the beauty of your garden. Now, the fun begins!

If you are lucky enough to have some beautiful pieces of driftwood or other interesting pieces of wood or rocks, try some arrangements with your bromeliads. I prefer to group bromeliads with similar shapes and textures together. Let your imagination go and have fun. Three or five neoregelias grouped with a piece of driftwood by a pool; a cluster of billbergias with their hanging blooms placed near rocks; tillandsias attached to a manzanita branch and hung on your patio wall—only a few of the ways bromeliads can be used. Many of the aechmeas have a stately vase shape and can be used in many ways. A large *Aechmea fasciata* displayed as a potted plant on your patio is very attractive.

Although most of us start with one or two bromeliads, we soon find they have multiplied by their offsets. If you find yourself fascinated by this family of plants, watch for opportunities to increase your collection by adding other genera. Some of the most popular are: aechmeas, neoregelias, tillandsias and billbergias. These are only a few of the genera of

Bromeliaceae family.

Bromeliads will fit in very well with most other shade plants, but I think you will find them most attractive if you keep them grouped together. The San Diego Bromeliad Society will have a display of bromeliads at the Casa del Prado, Balboa Park on July 28. The show is "Begonia Beauty" sponsored by the A. D. Robinson Branch of the American Begonia Society.

GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS:

Aechmeas—vase shaped, medium to large.

Neoregelias—rosette shaped, very small to large; soft to tough leaves.

Tillandsias—small clustering plants attached to pieces of wood, to large soft-leafed plants grown in pots.

Billbergias—tougher leaves, often grown in clumps; usually hanging inflorescence.



Mary Birchell and bromeliad species, *Ananas bracteatus striata*.

NOT AT THE SUPERMARKET

ROSALIE GARCIA

MARKETING IN OUR air-conditioned food stores with their organized and tempting displays is one of our daily pleasures. The enticing packages of prepared foods tend to make cooking a warming up process. Too often our dependence on the supermarket has closed our minds to goodies in our own gardens or to the possibilities of growing fruits and vegetables too perishable, or too unknown to make them commercially profitable. The organic movement concentrates on many of the perishables, because their outlets draw from local growers who use health food stores and roadside stands for their distribution. There one will find the subtropical fruits, tender skinned tomatoes, unusual greens, vine ripened melons, peppers and home garden surpluses which can delight one with fruits like the little lavender French celeste figs and white peaches that Grandmother used to grow. The country roads in our Spring Valley, Bonita and North County abound in stands where there are daily fresh offerings of garden produce. (Too often the prices are so high that much is not sold and lies there in a shriveled and deteriorating condition.)

A search through any of the big seedhouse catalogs will reward one with seeds of the non-commercial specialties groomed for the home gardener hunting for the extra flavorful but perishable fruit or vegetable. Watch for the warnings "tender skinned", "long germination", or "120 day period of growth" which only the patient will suffer. Look at the pictures and decide if such is in the supermarket bins. Joining a group like California Rare Fruit Growers will encourage one to try many non-commercial edibles and help one get seeds. One will soon become a collector of the rare and unusual. How often does one find salsify, chicory, white and golden beets, lemon and brittle and burpless cucumbers, gherkins, pink, white and yellow tomatoes in our beautiful markets?

A friend accuses me of looking at any plant with only one question: "Is it good to eat?" That kind of curiosity down through the ages has made our foods possible. A long process of experimentation and elimination has accepted many foods that have been lost or no longer used. Many are now growing in our gardens as ornamentals, just as the common

tomato was less than one hundred years ago.

A look through early American cookbooks compiled by religious orders who experimented and accepted recipes from housewives who showed imagination and a desire to keep meals varied and interesting is rewarding. They made do with what they had. Without benefit of refrigeration and modern canning facilities, with only salt and sugar, lye and the law of fermentation, they preserved and concocted many long forgotten drinks, desserts, sauces and dressings.

Like us, they had a mint bed in the garden and from it they savored its flavor. On a cold day, they had tea from the dried leaves; on a hot day, they boiled up a handful of the fresh leaves, let it sit and poured it over a lump of ice from the ice house, and refreshed themselves. Some may have put honey in it, but no sweetening is needed. For the tea table (our cocktail table) they candied the fresh leaves in the following manner: Two cups of fresh leaves, one egg white slightly beaten, three drops of oil of peppermint, one half cup of powdered (not confectioner's) sugar. Dip leaves in egg white, then in sugar. Lay on waxed paper to dry. Store in boxes between layers of waxed paper. Also, there are rose petals, violets, borage and guave flowers that respond to the same treatment—without the oil of peppermint.

The Shaker and Menonite cookbooks reveal ingenuity in whipping up quick desserts and drinks. In their gardens, as we do now, they had some grape vines and berry bushes. A very simple juice recipe in the Shaker cookbook is very useful when one has only a few grapes at a time. Two cups of grapes (our Concord would be fine) and one half cup of sugar in a quart jar. Pour in hot water until the jar is filled, seal and let the juice make itself. Or put it in the refrigerator to have an immediate supply of juice. (Wait a day or two.)

To stretch a few berries a long way an old Menonite recipe from Switzerland—called Berry Strum—is quick, easy and a natural to be presented with whipped cream and berry decorations: A quart of any kind of berries, three-fourths cup of sugar, twelve slices of stale, cubed white bread. Add sugar to crushed berries and let stand with the cubed bread until the

juices are absorbed. Add a pint of whole milk—or better a pint of cream. After it is chilled, it makes a custard-like dessert.

Nearly every garden has some roses which can add to the delight of the palate as well as the eye and nose. The petals of the old roses which are more fragrant than most of our modern ones are best. They should be red, but a drop of vegetable color will tint. Our early cooks flavored jams, jellies, syrups, desserts and made perfumes from their rose bushes. There are many recipes for rose water and rose syrup, but my experience is that the trick is fresh petals from roses that have just opened, picked early in the morning, and slowly infused over low heat. In the proportion of one gallon of rose petals to one quart of water, I put them in a covered kettle on simmer and let them stay about an hour. When the petals become pale, I strain off the water and bottle it for the refrigerator for use as flavoring. I have more use for the rose syrup which I make from the rose water in the proportion of one pint of rose water to one pint of sugar which I put on very low fire and let it simmer until it is syrupy but never really boiled. This is also kept in the refrigerator to be poured over canned fruit, especially peaches and pears, for an exotic flavor—on waffles, over plain backed custard or vanilla ice cream. A good tablespoon of the syrup added to a quart of home-made ice cream is company fare.

Rose petal jam often given to newlyweds for their first breakfast together is made by various recipes. Helen M. Fox in her book, *GARDENING WITH HERBS FOR FLAVOR AND FRAGRANCE*, gives one: One cup each of rose petals, sugar and water, a teaspoon of lemon juice and a touch of tartaric acid boiled together until syrup hardens on the spoon. I am inclined to use the modern way with commercial pectin of the packaged MCP in the canning department of our food stores. I grind the rose petals until I have four cups full, then I follow the MCP recipe for strawberry jam, with a little more lemon juice than one spoonful. I find a smoother texture and better flavor, for there is only two minutes of cooking.

Long ago the rose hips or haws were found to have medicinal value. It was the concentrated vitamin C that was the secret, but they were also boiled for jam and jelly. They come out fine by using the MCP recipe for guava jelly and jam. The Shakers made a fancy jam by seedling the hips, stuffing them with raisins and dropping them into boiling syrup and cooking gently for about twenty minutes. (One cup of sugar to one cup of water for the syrup.)

No proper parlor in our grandmother's day was without its rose jar on the center table. We still like that sort of Oriental incense aroma from sachets or jars that we can open and sniff as we go by. Properly made and dried the recipe will last for years. This comes from a newspaper clipping lent me by a friend.

I do not have the real name of its creator, but it is the same principle used in all pots-pourri. One gallon of rose petals picked early in the morning and at peak fragrance, just opening: spread out on screens or papers until dry. Takes several days. Some lemon and orange peel, lavender blossoms and thyme mixed in to dry with the petals adds to the aroma. Make a fragrant mix of one and one half pounds of table salt, an ounce of powdered orris root (at the drug store), dashes of allspice, powdered cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg. (Go really light on the spices, for they can over-power the roses.) In an earthenware jar, put in a layer of salt mixed with the spices, a layer of petals, alternately until all are in, stir and mix with a fork. Cover tightly for about three weeks, then pack in small and decorative jars.

The marigold is known not to smell like a rose, but it has possibilities for flavoring. It comes out a little pungent, but pleasant and sort of nut-like. For a baked custard, mash the petals into a paste and add to the milk, eggs and sugar, a cup of petals to two cups of milk. It will come out very golden. Mash another cup of petals and add to brown sauce, butter sauce or even white sauce. It will perk up left over roast. Guests will wonder out loud on the flavor.

How about the nasturtium that grows down the canyon or over the fence? The leaves and stems, flowers and seeds will all add to one's dinner. Mature leaves give a lift to any greens, tender leaves make fine spicy sandwiches with cheese or butter, and in green salads. The blossoms are a spicy addition also to sandwiches and salads, and the pickled seeds mashed in sauces and dressings add a dimension of piquancy.

Those scented geraniums that have come also from Grandmother's garden were used by her. She put a leaf in the bottom of the jelly glass and poured the apple jelly over it, and there was something exotic. She put a few leaves in the bottom of the cake pan and an aroma arose that was a breath from heaven. The velvety leaves of the peppermint geranium can flavor a molded fruit salad that will set the luncheon crowd to experiencing something really different. Use the standard two-cup, two tablespoon of gelatin recipe and boil about three leaves of the geranium with it for five minutes. Mrs. Fox recommends adding the juice of six lemons and a tablespoon of spinach juice, and let the mixture thicken before adding a cup of chopped fruit. What the spinach juice does, I am not sure, but the flavors do appear to have blended in a very smooth way.

Instead of wrapping foods for the barbecue in foil, try canna leaves for a flavor that foil does not have.

These are not all the goodies one may have in the garden, but only a suggestion to excite one's fancy during a stroll through the garden for something not in the supermarket.

CHOOSE CONTAINERS CAREFULLY

article and arrangements by Dorothy Marx

Betty Macintosh, photos

THERE ARE MANY SOURCES of inspiration when one's creativity begins to stretch, but one of the best ways to begin a flower arrangement is to select a container with character and combine with it plant material which seems made-to-order for it.

The plant material may be harmonious in color or texture or both. It may repeat the line or suggest the form of the vase. Curved material goes best in a rounded container; angular material in one with corners.

A distinctive container is one of obvious beauty or interest which is not seen so often as to have become ordinary. It may be one-of-a-kind and still not be distinctive if it is unattractive because of bad proportions, garish color or over-ornamentation. It need not be, though often is, expensive.

The container sets the style of the arrangement—often very strongly. A mass arrangement would look out of place in either a Japanese *usubata* or an avant-garde container.

It should still be remembered that the best vase for flowers is one which does not compete for attention with the flowers and is generally not brightly colored, shiny or heavily ornamented. Unusual texture or pattern on a vase is often the inspiration to the designer who is skillful enough to use plant material which will by subtle repetition or transition make the container and plant material into a unified flower arrangement.

Choose a container which appeals to you and will look well in your home; look for the right flowers and foliage to go with it and let your creativity take over.



The vase is handmade pottery in rosy red and gray with an all-over pattern and heavy texture. It goes well with the unpolished redwood base which is also reddish and rough-textured. The undulating driftwood echoes the line of the base and, unbelievably, fits the contours of the vase so well it rests outside it with no mechanics to hold it in place. Red/brown flax, proteas and a handsome stem of eucalyptus are placed with careful obedience to design principles.



A modern Mexican glass container is elevated on a lucite box. A pinholder, imbedded in the vase with paraffin, is nearly invisible but holds the two stems of philodendron and four stems of agapanthus. The fasciated stem of the lowest agapanthus was the inspiration for the arrangement as it forms a strong circular design and completes the arrangement effectively.



The modern Japanese container, ceramic, turquoise and angular, calls for a simple, bold design. The asparagus twists were painted black and arranged to increase the depth of the rather flat container. The unusual eucalyptus stem of unknown variety repeats the soft color of the container. One stem of vivid red *amaryllis* adds the needed contrast and makes a satisfying focal area.

WILD ROSES, LIKE THE ROSES OF CASTILE

HELEN WITHAM

SO FAR AS WE KNOW, the first Europeans to visit San Diego were members of an expedition commanded by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, who sailed into the bay in 1542, flying the flag of Spain. It seems almost incredible to us who have watched men walk on the moon not once but several times within a few short years, that 60 years were to pass before another expedition, under Sebastian Viscaino, landed on the shores of San Diego Bay, and more than two centuries before an attempt was made to occupy the territory claimed by Cabrillo so long before.

Early in 1769 two expeditions, one by land, one by sea, set out from Baja California to establish missions and presidios in Alta California, as our state was then known. Two tiny ships, carrying a total of 90 men faced a long and perilous sea voyage. The land expedition, commanded by Juan Gaspar de Portola, faced a march of more than a thousand miles. They were to establish a mission at San Diego and a mission and presidio at San Francisco. The best-known member of the expedition was the Franciscan Father, Junipero Serra.

The men of this company were not botanists, but they knew a rose when they saw one. Father Serra wrote of meeting "the queen of the flowers—the rose of Castile . . ." when the group camped somewhere in the foothills of the Sierra San Pedro Martir. They camped by a river thick with roses and wild grapes, and he mentions flowers in abundance—it must have been a felicitous spring, like this one of 1973.

In those days, when the watercourses had water in them, the native roses were found along the banks of many streams near the coast. Few of their old haunts remain in a natural state, but the roses are still plentiful farther inland. This species, *Rosa californica*, with its two-inch wide pink flowers, occurs from northern Baja California to Oregon. Both flowers and leaves are deliciously fragrant, and its foliage is a light clean green all summer and fall, when many other native shrubs are or appear to be dried up. Its flowering season is long, May to October at low altitudes, and its scarlet fruit brightens winter months.

Beautiful as it is, our wild rose would never appear on any list such as "Ten Best Native Shrubs for Your Garden". It is armed with sharp stout recurved prickles, spreads widely by fast-growing underground rootstocks, and grows into a thicket of tangled stems 8 to 10 feet high.

However, it should be right at the top of a list of "Plants Recommended for Impassable Barriers or Impenetrable Thickets", so if you need anything along that line . . . I gave it a piece of my canyon, where it is one of my very favorite plants, but then I have more canyon than most people do. I watch it warily, and periodically don my toughest clothing and attack it with loppers to keep it within bounds.

I find the rose family interesting as a family because so many of its members bear edible fruit not just edible, but really good to eat. Of course you know that blackberries and raspberries are "roses", but had you thought that most of the popular fruits of the temperate parts of the world are rose-related? Apple, pear, quince, peach, cherry, plum, almond, prune, apricot, nectarine, strawberry, loquat—doesn't leave much but citrus, does it?

Not only goodies but pretties in this family—the flowering fruits of course, and cotoneaster, raphiolepis, hawthorn, pyracantha, cinquefoil, bridal wreath. Our native toyon with its red berries in mid-winter belongs here; so do mountain mahogany, and chamise, and Catalina ironwood, and chokecherry, the wild strawberries of beach and mountain, and many other kinds of shrubs and herbs.

We could easily populate a garden with nothing but rose relatives.



AFRICAN VIOLETS

DR. G. W. BREMNER

THOSE READERS who are looking for a highly scientific article of great value to the sophisticated window gardener should now turn elsewhere. This squib is for that person who has always been chagrined to know that he always failed at African violets while others said that they were the easiest of all plants to grow. I am delighted to get a rose to good bloom without mildew or an iris to maturity without showing the ravages of a sneaky snail, so imagine what the feelings would be upon seeing two hundred of my own violet progeny blooming after having had years of failure! And all within an eleven month period! Like many other plant enthusiasts, I find it difficult to keep from trying to grow these little beauties, even after perhaps twenty-five failures. They always look so nice in the nursery or florists that "I'll try one more time." Even after reading several articles and at least three books, it was all but impossible to get a second bloom period. And friends kept telling me of having plants living and blooming for years!

Spring of 1972 found me yielding to temptation and again purchasing violets. After all, I told myself, floral arrangements cost much more and don't last as long even if I can only get one season from them. One variety was an older double blue (I assume older, at least there was no patent tag on it) and the other a beautiful double pink, patented. Now here's where the sticky part begins because as I understand patent laws one can get in a peck of trouble by "slipping" patented plants. So to be legal, don't do it. In brushing against the blue, two leaves were broken off, so I decided to experiment and placed a drop of

Superthrive and a drop of Dechlor (for removing chlorine) in a glass of water and inserted the leaves. This was the middle of May and within just a few days roots started. Mid-June saw little plants. About this time I was talking with a friend who has a window full of violets and we decided to grow a hundred and twenty-five for Mother's Day service in our church. Me? The failure?

I begged leaves and literally tore up my own original blue. He had read of splitting the stems to get two plants from each leaf, so thinking to go one better, I split these leaves two ways, hoping for four plants from each. What a surprise when one of these yielded twelve plants at one time and several others yielded eight! I found that leaves in water rooted faster, grew nicer plants faster, and were easier to separate than those in vermiculite. Also in my case it didn't seem to make any difference if the container was clear or dark. In fact best growth was noted by using frozen whipped cream containers with holes cut in the top to hold the leaves. The lids can be lifted periodically to add water and the new plants snipped off, then replaced to grow new plants on the old stems. Allow plants to get two sets of leaves before separating from the mother leaf. At this time the leaf may have several babies growing from the same area, so separate carefully without doing more damage to the roots than absolutely necessary. This is rather difficult if you have several leaves in the same container, for those roots really wander through the water! A single edged razor blade is helpful here, or a curved surgical blade.

At this stage I filled 100 herb pots with a very

light prepared potting mix. One bag was especially mixed for African violets, the other just said for house plants. Doing it again, I would use the former throughout even though it is a little more expensive, because the latter has a tendency to become a little more compacted and “shrink down” in the pot. The plants don't seem to mind, but it just looks rather silly to have a half pot of soil which can be refilled only by lifting the plant ball and filling from the bottom, because adding from the top covers the crown, which is strictly a no-no.

After tapping the soil gently into place an opening was made in the center with an old table knife and the plant lowered into place, being sure the root goes way down and the crown stays uncovered. Tuck the soil around the roots and water, using room temperature water with a drop each of Superthrive and Dechlor fertilizer at ¼ strength. At this point there is a disparity in what I did and the advice given me which was not to fertilize at this point. I'm sure there are many good violet fertilizers and in the past years several have found their way to my shelf, but this time I used a product with several trace elements and a brand name of “Watch Us Grow”. A rather inane name to my way of thinking, but it works, so that is the best recommendation for me.

Now another hobby came to my aid for there were a couple of old fifteen gallon aquariums in the garage which were hauled out and enough wax poured in the leaks to permit a little water in the bottom. An inch of fine gravel was placed and about a half inch of water to keep the humidity up without soaking the soil. Twenty-eight herb pots and their contents fit beautifully in each tank and these were placed in a large north window. By keeping water under the gravel, the plants needed water only about every ten days and the tanks were turned weekly to prevent one-sided growth. Quarter turns more often might give nicer shaped plants, but I didn't have room for the tanks to fit in the long way, so. . .Fertilizer, one fifth strength with one drop Dechlor and one drop Superthrive per gallon was used for watering. Water should be room temperature.

After about three weeks like this there was another group of babies, so the older ones had to come out of the tanks to give room to the little ones in the

“incubator”. These older youngsters were placed in foil lined flats, once again for humidity control. About three weeks later the process had to be repeated, for another set of babies had arrived! By this time I was out of herb pots and into 1½” plastic pots. What had started an innocent gesture was becoming a monster, but who can be guilty of throwing babies down the drain? Another month and another repetition—no more plastic pots, so into styrofoam cups with a hole scissored out of the bottom edge! There had to be an end, so we discarded the mother leaves, by now nearly stemless, and flushed the remaining babies. We had planned on fifty plants to present on Mother's Day, and even discounting the fatalities (about 8%) there were now two hundred and fifty. The twenty-eight that had once fitted in a fifteen gallon aquarium now needed two flats for spread. Instead of ten day watering they now dried out in from five to seven days. Thank goodness for a lecture by Mrs. van Zele, National President of the African Violet Society, at the San Diego Floral Association about this time! She let us know that overhead watering was all right so long as the water was tepid, leaves not in the sun, and water kept out of the crown. This made the chore much easier because there was no way to water from the bottom conveniently and even with a small nosed watering can it took time to get under the leaves of each plant. I learned the hard way to also avoid reflected sunlight when the leaves are wet. It leaves a bleached or burned spot on the leaves.

So far as the time element went, the first two leaves were placed in water in mid-May and bloomed for Christmas. Others started from mid-June through mid-August began blooming in April. Others started the same time still haven't bloomed. It seems some varieties take longer than others to blossom and more light without burning speeds the process. Fluorescents help, too, but were not available.

This has been a report—not a how-to process. Would it work again? I don't know. Will I try again? Yes, on a smaller scale. It's fun to start these babies and bring them through infancy and into maturity, but over-population is not good, and neither is abortion, so why start them just for the fun of it?

* * * * *



WHAT IS IT ?

MOST SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA GARDENERS will recognize, but will be unable to name, the beautiful perennial vine with the blood colored blossoms which are photographed above. It performs beautifully in our climate, but it is at some disadvantage here, because in this area there is no name by which it is commonly known. Gardeners, nurserymen and botanists do not agree on what to call it. Too bad, because for lack of a good name its popularity suffers.

Some folks call it a "trumpet vine", but that name is not definitive. Dozens of other vines are called by the same name. Many nurseries label it *Bignonia cherere*, but most plant taxonomists think that name is hopelessly inapplicable. Technically, we probably would be correct if we called it *Phaedranthus buccinatorius*, but few of us could pronounce such a name. If we could, then nobody would understand us! So, we might just as well keep on calling it "that big vine with the red blossoms".

It is evergreen and has tendrils with which it can climb high up on a wire, a fence, a trellis, or a tree. The blossoms appear intermittently throughout the warm portions of the year; they are large and colorful. The basic blood-red color is accented by a yellow throat and a bluish tint. In any sunny garden situation along the mild coastal strip of San Diego County, this plant will thrive to the point of being rampant—even invasive—but it can readily be kept under control by cutting it back to the desired size each year. Try it in your own garden; all your friends will admire it and ask, "What is it?"-----Bill Gunther-----

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WORKTIME COMES BEFORE FAIRTIME

OR

“Hey, Bob!”

NIBBY KLINEFELTER



HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED what it is like to set up an exhibit for the “Floriculture” section of the county fair? The first step is quite routine; submitting the entry form with payment of the entry fee. Next, you choose a location. . .or take what is left if the competition has been there earlier.

The space at this time is an empty shambles with nothing at all to indicate its future beauty. Your space. . .a pile of earth dumped in heaps. . .surrounded by other piles of earth. But—“There’ll be a fountain here and a fountain over there with pools between—a background of pine trees sweeping along the rise.” The whole scene is visualized by Bob Lamp, superintendent of floriculture, who has created these charming vistas for the Southern California Fair and Exposition for the past twelve or thirteen years. Bob also does the same for the Los Angeles County Fair, as well as for the Home Shows.

Members from your society come and bring their plants. When you arrive late, they ask, “WHERE have you been?” They stare at the piles of earth; they go look at the other spaces. “THEIR space looks larger and better,” they comment.

Finally we start to work to transform the piles of earth into what we like to think will be the most beautiful cactus and succulent gardens and collection of grafts ever seen. Our main goal: as many members as are available to enjoy working together to display favorite plants to the best advantage.

We work and people say, “Oh, this is so much fun! I hate to leave.” We have a series of pot-luck lunches and/or suppers together. There is much exchange of information about where this darling little *Crasula cornuta* came from and the best way to tend that magnificent *Euphorbia grandicornis*.

During all this work it’s:

“Hey, Bob—we need some rocks.”

“Hey, Bob—when will the weeds be cleared away?”

“Hey, Bob—we need a trellis for our hanging baskets.”

“Hey, Bob—when will the electricians be finished?”

“Hey, Bob. . .do you have any masking tape? Could

that boulder be moved from here to over there? Could you have someone saw these posts shorter? Where’s a hose? When do we get the tickets? the dichondra? the exhibitor’s cards???????????

All these questions, all these demands were those made by just our one society. Bob met them all with unfailing courtesy and unruffled composure. Imagine coping with the multiplicity of requests—there was always someone tagging after Bob to ask, “Just one more little thing, Bob.”

The young men doing Presidio’s exhibits were so impressed by Bob’s grace under pressure that they initiated a Thank You party for him a few nights before the fair opened. Word was passed from one to another; everyone was delighted to have the opportunity presented to them to express their appreciation for Bob’s creativity and great good humor while doing this tremendous job.

The surprise party was truly a surprise—his pleasure was our pleasure. Presidio made the arrangements for casual catering of fried chicken and fish with coleslaw et cetera served on improvised tables amid the space reserved for flower arrangements. Furthermore, the people from Presidio had made a large card for everyone to sign. In large letters, it began: “HEY, BOB!”

Meanwhile our exhibits were growing. The cast of workers changed from day to day—so did the placing of certain plants and rocks. It made me remember the first time I ever worked at the fair. Puzzling over the placement of a certain plant, Ruth Nelson told me, “It doesn’t matter where you put it, because everything gets moved at least six times before we’re through anyway.”

Over three dozen people and hundreds of plants were involved. The people had fun, and we hope our plants did. Coming in second in three out of three categories—when only two societies are exhibiting—is not the kind of triumph we like to announce, BUT there is always next year.

* * * * *

now is the time

—A Cultural Calendar of Care from our Affiliates—

BEGONIA SOCIETY

Thelma O'Reilly

Now is the time

to shift into the next pot size if needed.

to pot rooted cuttings and leaves.

to continue feeding.

to groom and inspect plants throughout growing season.

to spot spray individual plants at first sign of mildew.

to remove old flowers from tuberous types by snapping only the blossoms, not the stem.

to feed tuberous plants when the flower buds appear. Feed one tablespoon "Hi-Bloom" and one tablespoon of fish emulsion to one gallon of water.

to visit fairs and flower shows to choose new plants for your collection.

BONSAI SOCIETY

Simonne Daly

Now is the time

to put wet peat moss on the salt-encrusted exposed roots. Leave on about two months.

to use redwood chips under benches to create humidity.

to remove weeds, dead leaves and other debris.

to keep containers spotless.

to keep records in order on each bonsai.

to remember a bonsai must look like a natural specimen not just tufts at the end of branches.

to remember grafts should not be conspicuous.

to see that the length of stand for exhibiting purposes is twice the size of the pot.

CAMELLIA SOCIETY

Shala McNeil

Now is the time

to protect the roots from the sun's heat with an inch of mulch on top of the mix in the containers; use "pathway" size fir bark.

to still graft successfully but be very careful that your glass jars or plastic covers are sealed tight. If the scion and cleft dry out, you lose them.

to pinch back long willowy growth to shape your plants better now that the new growth has hardened off.

to continue your feeding—one level teaspoon per "gallon" size of the container if cotton seed meal is used; half strength if using granular or liquid food.

to be seeing first buds forming soon.

to spray the foliage in the cool of the evening, NOT in the heat of the day.

DAHLIA SOCIETY

Mildred Middleton

Now is the time

to continue regular watering program.

to feed with 5-10-10.

to spray for control of pests and mildew.

to disbud for quality blooms. Keep old spent blooms cut back to first set of leaves from main stalk, to prolong bloom season.

to keep the snails and slugs away from the plants now that the blossoms are opening.

to verify plant identification. Bloom season is the only time of the year that this can be done.

EPIPHYLLUM SOCIETY

George French

Now is the time

to repot plants that have outgrown pots and let them rest for two weeks, then start slow feeding.

to prune plants and take any desired cuttings.

to repot in new mix if needed to feed those not repotted with 6-8-10 granular food.

to mist foliage in evenings when it is cool.

to check for slugs, snails, and insects.

to spray if needed.

FUCHSIA SOCIETY

William H. Selby

Now is the time

to water with care. Sun and heat will cause high temperatures about the roots, and can "cook" them. Mist or fine spray often to increase humidity; grass, bricks, concrete under and around the plants to raise the humidity.

to change fertilizer from high nitrogen to one high in phosphorous to increase the output of buds and blooms. Using often in small amounts is better than one large serving at extended periods.

to check for inch worms, white fly, aphids, etc. Keep careful watch for inch worms before they devour most of your plant—they take on the color of the foliage or blossom they are devouring.

to pinch for shape.

to keep faded flowers and berries picked off the plant and cleared from the pots.

CALIFORNIA GARDEN

IRIS SOCIETY

Art Day

Now is the time

to dig and divide your old tall bearded irises. Retain only the strong outer rhizomes with good fans. Rhizomes that have sent up bloom stalks will not bloom again. Trim fans to one half length.

to plant new divisions at least eighteen inches apart. Plant the rhizomes at a depth to allow about one inch of soil over them.

to cut off dead foliage of the beardless iris types. Do not dig beardless irises until September, and then only if crowded. They do not like to be moved.

ORGANIC GARDENING

John E. Miller

Now is the time

Radishes, carrots, cucumbers, all warm weather flowers and vegetables should be bought in flats to transplant. You can take off most commercial dirt in the flat and use your own mixes. Good starters are pure vermiculite, sand, peat moss, or water. Pennyroyal cuttings root readily in water.

to protect plants from snails and slugs—using sharp sand or beer placed in jar lids.

to try planting marigolds and calendulas among vegetables to prevent nematodes.

to plant mums, African daisies, nasturtiums, etc. to make a showy place of your vegetable garden.

to make a harmless spray of asparagus, garlic, onions, jalapenos. Blend with water; let stand 24

JULY—AUGUST

hours; strain and spray.

to try tansy, pennyroyal and mint to eradicate ants and fleas.

ROSE SOCIETY

Dee Thorson

Now is the time

to be especially alert for spider mite invasion. Bushes infected badly appear to be suffering from lack of water. Check under sides of lower leaves and, if mites are present, hose off every day with a strong stream of water until all mites and eggs are gone.

to check for small holes in the end of cut canes; these are made by borers and will cause die-back on the cane—recut cane and apply pruning compound to cut end.

to guard against inch worms and rose slugs, which are active about this time—check undersides of leaves often for those that might house a mass of eggs containing worms. (Eggs may be grey, white or light green in color) Destroy any leaves containing eggs.

to continue removing any rust infected leaves.

to water deeply and often during hot weather. Water overhead with mist spray when the humidity is low.

to use a thick mulch, not only to preserve moisture and keep the feeder roots from drying out but most important to lower soil temperature, because activity within the soil decreases as the soil temperature rises. Therefore, the higher—the soil temperature the less growth etc. takes place.

to remove spent blooms to

promote new growth.

GENERAL NOTES

Green Thumb

Now is the time

to keep your orchids moist at all times. Keeping your plants in same type of mix makes them easier to care for.

to pinch back chrysanthemum plants again in July and for the last time in August. Stop feeding when buds show color.

Birds-of-Paradise resent being divided, but may be moved now to another sunny location. They need excellent drainage and acid soil. Soil sulphur can be added at base of plant—feed cottonseed meal year-round.

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Two Interesting Plants



Angelonia Grandiflora

"Why, that's a native of my homeland, Indonesia!" exclaimed Mrs. Brunsting of the Dutch Garden Flower Shop, as she stooped to catch the delightful fragrance of "*Angelonia grandiflora*." These attractive plants somewhat resemble some of our own natives—sage and penstemon—though more graceful, with lovely little mauve flower faces. The plant is native to South America, resembling *Alonsoa*, the "Mask" flower, belonging to the Figwort Family, Scrophulariaceae, according to the Greystone Garden Encyclopaedia. They have undivided, lanceolate leaves, and average two feet in height. The popular varieties are: *Angelonia grandiflora*, pale mauve and fragrant, and *Angelonia angustifolia*, violet—both suit-



Close up of *Angelonia grandiflora*

able for cool greenhouse, or garden area; and *Angelonia salicariaefolia*, which must be grown in a hothouse. All may be grown out-of-doors in summer.

Propagation: Best compost consists of equal parts loam and leaf mold, with sand added freely (or the equivalent, as you find most suitable). In February, shoots are shortened by 2/3, and when more new shoots are from 1/2 to 2" long, plants may be repotted into larger sizes. They are watered freely in summer—infrequently during winter months.

Seeds or Cuttings: *Angelonia* may be treated as an annual by sowing seeds in spring for flowering plants in autumn. In Southern California, where most mild, the plant is perennial.

If you have an informal garden, and have not yet met this informal friend, you will enjoy knowing *Angelonia grandiflora*.

—Clem and Dee Runner,

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—Clem and Dee Runner.

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